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ABSTRACT

This presentation of the Dutch experience with the international exchange of publications focuses on the acquisition of publications from China and Indonesia to illustrate problems of availability. Lack of depository systems, restrictive export policies, inadequate national bibliographies, exorbitant commercial prices, and time consuming delivery systems are highlighted as problems in international exchange with developing Asiatic nations. The paper concludes with a plea for IFLA to consider how Western and Eastern libraries may cooperate to achieve the mutual goal: universal availability of publications in the most efficient and economical way. (RAA)

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ACQUISITION OF PUBLICATIONS FROM ASIATIC COUNTRIES: DUTCH PROBLEMS

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ACQUISITION OF PUBLICATIONS FROM ASIATIC COUNTRIES: DUTCH PROBLEMS

By Maria J.Schiltman, Royal Library

Acquisition of material in the original language from Asiatic countries takes place in the Netherlands in a number of institutions and libraries (not, however, in the Royal Library at The Hague). Those institutions/ libraries are either attached to an university or somehow co-operating in university research. This is only logical since the universities are a main source for scientific research about countries with languages difficult to access. European scientists and students who have their field of interest in an Asiatic country have a strong need for research libraries that are as complete as possible, for their research object is far-away and often difficult to visit. Therefore it is up to us librarians to acquire the material they need and to overcome the barriers to this goal. How easily this is said by me, a staff member of the Royal Library. I do not have to struggle with these problems because my library has many national functions but not the task to acquire publications on an universal scale. In a small country with so many well-conducted specialized libraries and with a well-organized interlibrary lending system it would be superfluous, a waste of energy — not to speak of finances — to 'nationalize' or centralize these difficult acquisitions in one library. For, one of the general problems is the need of at least one staff member who can read the language and who is able to be in touch with current publishing in the Asiatic country concerned. So where else can this acquisition be done better than in a specialized institution? Moreover, all these institutions are financed directly of indirectly by our ministry of Education & Science from which also the Royal Library is receiving its budget. For the benefit of an optimal scientific research on the one hand and for an optimal use of the financial and other available means on the other hand we in the Netherlands prefer a decentralized acquisition of Asiatic publications. However, it is obviously a national task to draw up an inventory of the problems the different institutions are facing with regard to the acquisition of their library material. Maybe this meeting will offer solutions for one or more of them and I shall only be too happy to pass these on to the appropriate librarians. This would also be a fine compensation for the time and trouble they took to put me in the (Asiatic) picture.

Let me start with what we in the Netherlands do not have: a real national programme for the acquisition of Asiatic publications. The reason for this might be found in the preference for decentralization already referred to. However, with some goodwill we could see the acquisition of Indonesian publications as a sort of one-sided national programme. That is to say Indonesia is the only Asiatic country where we are buying on the most extensive scale. This is understandable in view of the centuries we had a strong tie with Indonesia. Three very large collections of 'pre-Indonesian' publications are to be found in the Netherlands, to wit: in the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology and in the University Library, both in Leyden, the third one in the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute) in Amsterdam. There is a satisfactory degree of co-operation between the three libraries. Nevertheless I shall treat them separately in this paper.

From its establishment in 1851 the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology has concentrated itself upon scientific research with regard to the Dutch East Indies and later on to Indonesia. The Institute is a foundation with personal members and a board. It is an autonomous organization with the aim — as embodied in the regulations -- of furthering of

the study of the languages, anthropology and history of Southeast Asia, of the Southseas region and the Caribbean area. These purposes are pursued through a large state grant (95% of the budget) and revenues of its own. These means enable the Institute to employ 42 staff members, of which 31 for the library and documentation services. After Indonesia had obtained its independence the Institute widened its activities towards modern social sciences and also documentation with regard to the new state. The Institute performs for the Dutch universities, and in particular for the Leyden University, not only the function of a service-body but it offers also the opportunity for discussion and co-operation. The library's holdings amount to 100,000 titles, of which 95,000 books and 5,000 periodicals. Moreover the library is in possession of a very large collection of microfiches of Indonesian scientific literature published between 1954 and 1968. The library represents one of the largest and most complete collections on Indonesia in the world. For a good part its holdings are included in the union catalogues in the Royal Library at The Hague so as to give them a widespread availability. How to keep these collections up-to-date?

Indonesian publications are very difficult to acquire. This is a most serious problem owing to the poor distribution network of Indonesian book production. When a foreign library has been so fortunate as to have ordered some titles another problem arises: how to get the material safe and sound to Europe. And here as a rule not the postal authorities are to blame but mainly all sorts of formalities with which the Indonesian bookseller is unable to cope.

The United States, Australia and the Netherlands have succeeded in solving these problems by buying on the spot through a representative. For the sake of completeness I must state that there are a few more countries (e.g. the Philippines) which proceed in the same way but they act on a much smaller scale. In the context of this paper I have to restrict myself to an outline of the Dutch programme which, if I may say so without undue national pride, is the most effective one.

Our representative in Jakarta is a Dutch citizen, well-introduced in the Indonesian booktrade and speaking the language. He is the head of a small bureau consisting of four full-time and eleven part-time Indonesian employees. In different ways the representative is trying to acquire — via purchase, exchange, gift or even loan — as many publications as he can lay hands on in the alpha and gamma spheres. The acquisitions are pre-catalogued in Indonesia and then sent to the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology in Leyden by diplomatic seabag thanks to the kind co-operation of the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs. The bureau in Jakarta compiles also accession lists of the material, mimeographs and distributes them, free of charge, under the title 'Katalog Perpustakaan. Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde. Jakarta' to libraries and scholars interested in Indonesian literature. This is how since 1969 the Royal Institute is receiving annually a 2,500 books which they re-catalogue in more detail, classify and key-word for the annual accession list 'Catalogus van de Bibliotheek van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde. Leiden'. The latter lists are generated by a computer.

The outcome of this programme demonstrates clearly how important personal relations are in the acquisition policy. On the other hand the fact that foreign libraries are in the possession of publications lacking in the libraries in the country of origin may be understandably cause some resentment. Therefore, since 1979 all government publications which the Dutch bureau in Jakarta is receiving are microfilmed there. The film is sent to the Netherlands and the original publication is given in per-

manent loan to PDIN, the National Scientific Documentation Centre in Jakarta.

The greatest problem — even felt in a national programme as ours — is to get information about newly published books and periodicals, for Indonesia is the only country in Southeast Asia that has no legal deposit. I must plea guilty here because this obstacle is an inheritance from us, the Dutch. We in the Netherlands did not have such a law and so we did not consider one for the Dutch East Indies. However, the situation may improve in a not too remote future, as the Indonesian government is considering the establishment of a national library and it is to be hoped that responsibility for legal deposit and for the national bibliography will be among its functions. In a sense, 'Daftar Buku', which is published annually, might be regarded as a sort of national bibliography. But unfortunately this bibliography is not complete and many a title in it is not obtainable.

There further is a great difference between commercial and non-commercial publications. With regard to the first-mentioned, the Dutch representative has no great trouble in getting information about probably 90% of the book production, since only a few publications appearing outside Jakarta do not reach the booktrade in this capital. The situation, however, with regard to the non-commercial publications is much more complicated. The majority of them — the official publications — are printed (95% roneographed) and published by the official bodies themselves, so not by the Government Printing Office. Although the government departments have been instructed to deposit a copy of their publications with the Sekretariat Negara (Cabinet Office) of the Republic of Indonesia it appears that this instruction is not (yet) fully observed.

Since the holdings of our former ministry of Overseas Territories were transferred to the University Library in Leyden the second extensive collection of Indonesiana is to be found in that library. As I said already there is a good deal of co-operation with the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology. This is for instance reflected in the participation in the acquisition programme of the Dutch representative in Indonesia, who also buys for the University Library. The librarian in question is on the whole very happy with this arrangement but there seem to be two drawbacks. Firstly, it is practically useless to indicate personal desiderata: when they reach 'our man in Jakarta' it is nearly always too late to do anything about them: the titles in question are no longer available. Secondly, the library cannot select, it has to take what the representative is sending. This is only stating facts, not making a complaint.

The Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute) in Amsterdam finally has a fairly complete collection of social-economic literature about Indonesia before 1950. Generally speaking the activities of the Tropical Institute were directed towards the Netherlands East Indies and after the independence of Indonesia towards all tropical countries. The Institute has especially many exchange-agreements with third world countries, although also many publications are ordered directly from and through India, Singapore, the Philippines. They do not encounter great problems in these acquisitions but we have to take into account that the Institute buys only those publications that appear in a Western language.

The Royal Tropical Institute is the focal point for an interesting national project. The fact is that Indonesian scholars seeking access to pre-war sources on their country are confronted with the difficulty that most of the relevant literature is not available at home. This material is located in the Netherlands, mainly in the three libraries treated in

this paper. It is, however, generally felt that this historical material is still of the utmost importance to modern Indonesia in its development efforts. Therefore a microfiche project has been started with financial support of the Dutch minister for Development Co-operation. The central library of the Royal Tropical Institute sends catalogues of the relevant Dutch holdings to the Pusat Dokumentasi Ilmiah Nasional / PDIN (National Scientific Documentation Centre) of the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia/ LIPI (Indonesian Institute of Sciences) where a selection is made of the titles. Upon return of the catalogues the selected books and periodicals are filmed and the microfiches deposited with the PDIN in Jakarta. Accession lists of this microfiche collection are widely distributed and so every librarian and other interested persons can order copies from the holdings deposited with the PDIN. I mention this project here because programmes as this one may foster goodwill and it is goodwill that is strongly needed in the acquisition of Asiatic publications.

I deliberately treated Indonesia at great length. Not only because my country has historical relations with Indonesia but mainly because Indonesia is a young country on its way to become a very important Asian state. It might be that international help, including assistance from IFLA, can lead to a stronger organization of its libraries and booktrade for the benefit of the diffusion of knowledge in the home-country and abroad.

China. The Sinological Institute at the Leyden University is one of the leading institutes for Chinese studies in the Western world. It is the only Chinese library in the Netherlands and can be seen as some sort or a national library in this respect: its holdings cover all fields from popular readingbooks to highly technical literature. Every book or periodical in a Chinese language is welcome in our Sinological Library.

The growing interest in China after the Second World War brought about the expansion of the Sinological Institute and its library. When the first catalogue of Chinese books at Leyden was published in 1883 it listed only 234 titles. At present the library has more than 160,000 Chinese volumes, more than 20,000 Western language books and about 5,000 Japanese works, not counting periodicals, newspapers, microfilms and audio-visual materials. Here we witness a concentration of human as well as material resources in one institute in order to achieve the highest possible level in sinological research and studies.

The Institute collects publications in all disciplines regarding both the Mainland and Taiwan. During the last ten years Taiwan publications increased in number. We even may speak of a publication boom. Nobody knows exactly how many titles have been published, it might be an annual number of 8,000 or 10,000. Even an attempt to acquire all this material is practically impossible because Taiwan has no real national bibliography whereas her copyright law is outdated.

I put all this quite bluntly in the hope that colleagues here present will contradict me and show us the way to a better and more complete acquisition policy. We in the Netherlands have difficulties to find out what has been published in Taiwan. Yes, the National Central Library in Taipei compiles a national bibliography but only of those publications that are brought in at the library and consequently the bibliography cannot be complete. With regard to the government publications it should be noted that the problem is even greater at least for the foreign buyer. The fact is that government bodies are free to publish where they choose and this makes bibliographic control very difficult indeed. However, the Research, Development and Evaluation Commission of the Executive Council in Taiwan published in 1978 two bibliographies of the Chinese government publications:

publications: one on periodicals and one on monographs. The former covers most of the current government periodicals and the latter includes most publications from 1971 to 1977.

In the Mainland of China the situation is quite different. From the end of the Second World War untill about 1965 publishing went up till an estimated 20,000 titles a year. However, only one bookstore, Guozi Shudian, was allowed to export Chinese books, while the National Library and the Academy of Science — both in Peking — were the only two libraries with the permission for international exchange of publications. These measures made foreign acquisition difficult but not impossible.

In 1966 the Cultural Revolution broke out in China and one of its consequences was that the procument became an extremely difficult matter. As far as we know only a few pamphlets were printed, hardly any scholarly books, while practically all periodicals except a few were suspended.(1). A number of these scarse publications could be smuggled out of the country to Hong Kong where they were xeroxed and sold against enormous prices. The budgets of the sinological libraries had to suffer much for a small amount of publications!

We can be happy that this is over and done with. Since 1977 publishing is growing again and it seems that already over 1,000 periodicals are now again available in China, although so far less than 300 of them can be exported. In modern times a paper shortage can be relieved through the production of microfilms or microfiches. These technical solutions cannot — not yet anyhow — be applied in China because those production facilities are inadequate. We may only hope the Chinese will get more in the near future.

Universal availability of sinological publications in Western Europe is faced with an extra barrier: the fact that almost every sinological library in this part of the world was started by amateurs, assistants of professors. And that is why each library is different and why no uniform system of cataloguing and other library processes is followed. This makes co-operation of these libraries in Western Europe somewhat difficult. In order to better understand this problem the chief librarian of the Sinological Institute in the Netherlands is making a survey of major sinological libraries in Western Europe.

A reason for the large proportion of attention I paid to Indonesia and China is that these two countries offer more problems than any other country, problems moreover which are specific and different from the more routine difficulties we meet in other Asiatic countries. In consideration of this I have an uneasy feeling that the second 'Western' paper on this topic presented here in Manila may deal with more or less the same points. Therefore I shall only touch upon them so that if my assumption proves to be wrong we have at least an opportunity and basis for discussion on them.

As I said I heard of no problems particular for one of the other Asiatic countries. The general complaint however is that it takes a long time — in some cases even eight or nine months — before the publications arrive in the Dutch libraries. In this respect we are under the impression that the mail is in the fault because the publishers are sending their invoices upon despatch of the material. The invoice is, of course, sent by air. However, that way of transportation would be very expensive for books and would be too heavy a burden on the budgets. This is not so much a typical Dutch as a general international problem, because J.A.Ombu writes in 'International Library Review' in 1977 "... to obtain material by sea mail ... could be a matter of six months on the average". (2). Would it

be possible to speed up the postal delivery if IFLA takes action in this matter and asks the Universal Postal Union to urge its members to give priority to the transportation of books?

As an exchange librarian I can inform you from my own experience that exchange of publications with Asiatic countries is often very difficult. This may be a typical problem of a country like mine with a difficulty accessible language. The point is that although many publications in the Netherlands are printed in a world language quite a number of them are not available for exchange purposes, and then it is very hard, of course, to obtain foreign publications that are only sent on an exchange basis. In this connection I like to remark that it is a good thing that the IFLA Section on Exchange of publications has widened its activities to the whole field of acquisition. I hope that the enlarged section will pay attention to this problem.

Rodriguez writes in his paper for IFLA Brussels 1977: "In the developing countries not all publications are released through commercial channels. This factor limits their general availability". (3). I quite agree. However, also many commercial publications are often difficultly obtainable or not at all, since the book trade is very weak in nearly all Asiatic countries. The experience of the Dutch acquisitions librarians is that they have the best chance to get a publication if they order it at a bookseller situated as close as possible in the neighbourhood of the publisher in question. This applies in particular to India and Pakistan. Further arguments for this strategy are on the one hand that many publications are printed only in small editions and on the other hand the poor inland communications. Of course, a flood of invoices for single titles is the consequence but the acquisitions librarian canalizes this stream towards the accounting division!

It goes without saying that we need good and up-to-date reference material for this manner of buying. And here we run up against another problem: the lack of well-classified, national directories. International directories of publishers and booksellers — however excellent they may be — have the tendency to give much information about the well-organized book trade and little with regard to the developing countries. (4). So we are in need of national directories. The existing lists are — as far as we know — outdated and/or classified in such a way that a foreign acquisitions librarian can hardly or not find the information. (5). In one of these guides I read in the preface: "The disorderly order of listing ... is not according to any system of preference but for convenience in compilation and printing". This confession shows clearly where at least a part of the difficulty has to be found. Could international help improve the situation?

Finally I want to point out that many letters remain unanswered even after urgent requests. Lack of staff often may be the excuse but certainly not always.

In this short survey I have tried to identify some of the problems with which we have to deal in order to obtain Asiatic publications in our libraries in Western Europe; how in some cases we are even trying to built up at high prices an Asiatic collection as complete as possible in a 'Western' library.

However, let us look at the matter from the other end. Not we in Europe ought to have the most complete collections but the Asiatic national libraries! For, just as Universal Bibliographic Control also Universal Availability of Publications ought to begin 'at home'. In my opinion we

might consider how we could help our colleagues especially those in countries with a weak economy. Could the above-mentioned Dutch project with Indonesian government publications be more widely followed and even be extended to more publications? Also in view of the long time needed for transportation it might be better to make microfilms and to airmail these abroad, if desired against a price including a retribution for the publisher. In such a programme the national libraries could play a leading role with their collection of the national book production.

Let us use the international platform provided by IFLA to consider how Western and Eastern librarians can co-operate to achieve the mutual goal: universal availability of publications in both the most efficient and economical way.

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and
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(2) J.A.Ombu, Acquisition Problems in Developing Countries. In: 'International Library Review', vol.9, 1977, p.86/87.

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